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## STUDY PROJECT

### LONG RANGE SURVEILLANCE UNITS (LRSU): THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

BY

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LONG RANGE SURVEILLANCE UNITS (LRSU):  
THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

An Individual Study Project

by

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## ABSTRACT

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# LONG RANGE SURVEILLANCE UNITS (LRSU): THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to inform the reader of the newly activated U.S. Army Long Range Surveillance units (LRSU) pronounced "LURSUE," with particular emphasis on the European oriented CORPS level companies. The intent of the paper is to take an overall look at Long Range Surveillance units in general and discuss their role in the Army today and finally answer the question -- "what role will LRSU play in the CONUS based contingency army of the next century"? To answer this question and see where LRSU is going in the future we must understand where it has been in the past. To do this I will initially describe the background of the current LRS units, highlight their maturation, and discuss the reasons for their demise and eventual rebirth in 1986. Following the establishment of this foundation, I will discuss the current organization and operational capability of the European CORPS LRS company, and discuss the major issues currently facing the LRS community. I will then conclude the paper with a suggestion for appropriate roles and missions for LRS units as the Army moves into the 21st century.

Effective LRS soldiers are highly trained, disciplined, self reliant, mature, and motivated. If they are properly tasked they are an extremely reliable human intelligence (HUMINT) source of combat

information. LRSU can be employed anywhere in the operational continuum ranging from the low-intensity environment of counter-insurgency, counter-narcotics thru peacetime contingencies and the mid to high intensity battlefield environment. They are capable of infiltration into enemy territory by various methods and collect information unobtainable by any other means. The type and quality of information that they can provide is extremely valuable to a commander's decision-making process. LRS soldiers provide the one thing no sophisticated electronic sensor system can provide--an experienced human observer capable of prioritizing and interpreting what he sees in all types of weather and terrain conditions. If tasked properly they are capable of providing their commander with his most reliable source of enemy information and become his primary "Eyes Behind The Lines."<sup>1</sup>

### BACKGROUND

LRS units are neither fish nor fowl. They fill the void along the seam of both conventional and special operations units and can trace their origins to the trenches of World War I. The positional warfare created by the trenches of WW I negated the traditional methods of military reconnaissance and gave impetus to creating new ways to collect enemy information. The observation balloon and eventually the airplane were both used extensively for reconnaissance behind the enemy's front line. The Infantry of both sides also formed small units to infiltrate the trench lines and



gather information on enemy strength, dispositions and intentions.<sup>2</sup>

Reconnaissance matured during the period between the wars with the development and refinement of three tools of modern warfare: the airplane, the radio, and motorized units. These developments created the capability for units to operate deep in the enemy's rear area and quickly report the collected information and more efficiently perform the function previously carried out primarily by either foot soldiers alone or by horse cavalry. It was the refinement of these tools of modern warfare that set the stage for the development of modern LRS units.

It is difficult to determine the genesis of the modern concept of inserting a force deep behind enemy lines for the purpose of gathering intelligence and conducting combat operations as the concept grew and developed over a long period of time from a wide diversity of sources. The British during World War II, however, made a major contribution toward the establishment of the U.S. Army's present day Long Range Surveillance units. During the early phase of the war the British developed several different unorthodox elite units to conduct reconnaissance and direct combat operations against the Axis powers in the Middle-East, North Africa, and the Japanese in Burma. Three of these British units are worthy of note in this paper. Those British units are:

Long Range Penetration Groups (LRPG)

Long Range Desert group (LRDG)

Special Air Service (SAS)

The modern concept of conducting long-range operations deep behind enemy lines was first developed by British Major General Orde Charles Wingate during the second World War. At the time General Wingate was heavily engaged with countering Japanese successes in the jungles of Burma. In an effort to stop the Japanese advances he developed and organized what he called Long Range Penetration Groups (LRPG). These elite British units were organized, trained, and equipped to conduct operations deep behind Japanese lines.<sup>3</sup> LRPG units had to be small enough to slip through enemy lines, yet strong enough to carry out strike operations. General Wingate felt that LRPG units should not operate in the forward area because of the high concentration of the enemy's best troops. He felt that deep behind the front lines the enemy would be unlikely to put up an adequate defense because that much larger area was difficult to defend without pulling troops from forward units. As such, unit headquarters, supply depots, and communications nodes and airfields were readily vulnerable to attack. The concept of the LRPG became Wingate's greatest contribution to military thought.<sup>4</sup>

In the North African theater, a similar unorthodox organization was developed, however, it was organized and equipped to counter a different threat in a different environment. The Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) was established in the late thirties by British Major Ralph Bagnold and operated in the area generally from the Mediterranean south to the northern portion of Sudan. The LRDG was equipped with automatic weapons, state of the art communications gear, and vehicles specifically fitted for desert

travel. The primary mission given to the LRDG was to conduct reconnaissance deep behind enemy lines in the deserts of both Egypt and Libya. A collateral mission given the LRDG was to infiltrate intelligence agents and SAS raiding teams deep in the enemy's rear area and additionally, to conduct their own combat operations, primarily in the form of raids. Their most important role was in conducting surveillance of the main coastal roads along the Mediterranean, and for months maintained observation and reporting on enemy traffic in the area. The LRDGs eventually became the eyes and ears of the British command and were considered a primary source of intelligence information.<sup>5</sup>

The last British unit I want to highlight is the famous Special Air Service. The SAS was originally formed in 1941 from the remnants of various commando units in the Middle East. Put under the command of British Lieutenant David Sterling the SAS was used primarily to conduct combat operations behind enemy lines. The SAS used the LRDG as their primary means of insertion and extraction until they eventually developed their own ground-based infiltration capability. The SAS went on to conduct numerous successful operations against General Rommel's airfields, communications, and supply system in the North African theater until Lieutenant Sterling's eventual capture by the Germans.<sup>6</sup>

The SAS was initially developed primarily to conduct combat operations and considered intelligence collection a collateral mission. During World War II they proved to be very successful at operating deep behind enemy lines in the Middle East and North Africa. Today the SAS has evolved into not only a special strike force but also

have developed a formidable intelligence collection capability which has been validated on numerous NATO field exercises and in the conflict in the Falklands Islands in 1982. During the British campaign to retake the Falklands, SAS soldiers were inserted onto the Argentinian mainland early on in the campaign and established surveillance sites where they monitored ship and aircraft movements and reported them back to the British Naval Task Force commander. The SAS soldiers remained operational throughout the conflict and were successfully extracted from Argentina at the conclusion of hostilities.<sup>7</sup>

The closest linkage to today's American LRS soldier can also be found in World War II, however, this time in an American unit in the Pacific theater of operations. These outstanding soldiers were known as the "Alamo Scouts." Although today's LRS soldiers do not trace their lineage and heraldry directly to the Sixth Army Alamo Scouts they have a kindred spirit with these World War II soldiers as the focus of both units is primarily on the collection of combat intelligence. The Sixth Army Alamo Scouts were the eyes and ears of the Army commander LTG Walter Krueger. General Krueger, a Texan from San Antonio, selected the name for this special organization from the nickname for his Headquarters--the Alamo Force.<sup>8</sup> Upon assuming command of the Sixth Army in February 1943, General Krueger faced numerous challenges. High on his priority list was the problem of obtaining accurate information on the enemy. In an effort to solve this lack of reliable intelligence he created a training center in November 1943 for "training selected volunteers in reconnaissance and raider work."<sup>9</sup> General Krueger gave his

G-2, COL Horton White, the overall responsibility for training of the soldiers. COL Fredrick Bradshaw, of the G-2 section, was put in direct charge of the daily operations of the training center. Soldiers were selected based on their possessing the highest qualifications of courage, stamina, intelligence, and adaptability regardless of military experience or current military occupation speciality. Specially selected graduates were designated Alamo Scouts while the remainder of the graduates were returned to their home units to perform similiar reconnaissance functions for their commanders. COL Bradshaw personally selected each soldier that attended the training center which eventually graduated ten classes averaging approximately thirty soldiers each. Of these graduates ten Alamo Scout teams were formed consisting of one officer and five to six enlisted men.<sup>10</sup> From 1943 to 1945 the Alamo Scouts performed a wide diversity of missions for the Sixth Army consisting primarily of static surveillance, reconnaissance, and limited combat operations. They worked directly for COL White, the Sixth Army G-2, who had overall responsibility for not only their training, but also their employment. Virtually every major operation of the Sixth Army during the period was preceded by Alamo Scout surveillance or deep reconnaissance on enemy units and installations. The Alamo Scouts operations were not limited solely to reconnaissance operations. They were the reconnaissance element for the highly sucessful hostage rescue operation conducted by LTC Henry Mucci, commander of the 6th Ranger Battalion, which rescued 512 survivors from the Bataan Death March. Additionally, the Alamo Scouts successfully conducted a second PW rescue operation

by themselves.<sup>11</sup> The true tribute to the Alamo Scouts is that although they were involved in over 80 missions in an extremely high threat environment, not one Alamo Scout was killed or captured.<sup>12</sup> Although the Alamo Scouts performed a wide variety of operations ranging from static surveillance to deep active reconnaissance and some direct action; their primary focus remained on the collection of intelligence and therefore was more in keeping with the mission of today's LRS soldier.<sup>13</sup>

Deep penetration operations continued to grow and mature during the Vietnam War. The term LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol), pronounced LURP, was coined during the Korean War, but became popular during Vietnam where it initially reflected the type of missions given the units. Special Forces first developed the LRRP concept in Vietnam in 1964 with the creation of highly classified units known as Detachment B-52, B-50, and B-56 that conducted operations throughout Vietnam and also cross-border operations into Cambodia. These highly capable reconnaissance units were absorbed into MACV-SOG (Studies and Observation Group) in November 1967. In addition to the US Special Forces's LRRP teams, both regular US Army units and Australia's SAS deployed LRRPs throughout their areas of responsibility. Later in the war, all US infantry divisions and separate infantry brigades were given a LRRP capability.<sup>14</sup> Eventually, the majority of commanders in Vietnam misused their LRRP units. The vast majority of LRRP units in Vietnam were given primarily direct action missions as opposed to conducting reconnaissance and intelligence operations. Pure

reconnaissance missions were not popular with the great majority of commanders whose mindset was focused on a high body count. The term LRRP itself was modified over time and eventually shortened to LRP (Long Range Patrol). This more accurately reflected the unit's true mission focus, i.e. direct action as opposed to reconnaissance and intelligence collection. Eventually all LRP units in Vietnam were organized under the rubric of the 75th Ranger Regiment, however, the reorganization was merely a paper drill with no impact on the consolidation or improvement of training, tactics, or operations.<sup>15</sup> With the exception of the Sixth Army Alamo Scouts during World War II and the Special Forces use of LRRPs in the early days of our involvement in Vietnam, the primary focus of long range special purpose units was geared toward direct action. Reconnaissance and intelligence collection was considered a secondary mission. Commanders who did not appreciate or understand the synergistic value intelligence can have on the battlefield misused their potentially lucrative intelligence collection units as either a deep strike asset or as a regular line infantry unit. If carried out at all, the collection of intelligence was considered a collateral function. The brave soldiers of these units willingly accepted their high risk missions content in the fact that they were being properly tasked to perform appropriate missions.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEMISE AND REBIRTH OF THE LRRP/LRP

In 1974, the Army abandoned the LRP concept and disbanded virtually all LRP units. The two main factors that led to the demise of the LRP in the aftermath of Vietnam were a basic American fascination with gadgets and a traditional military prejudice associated with elite units within the military. The demise of the LRP created a glaring gap in the commander's ability to collect reliable and accurate combat information on the enemy. This gap remained for the next twelve years.<sup>16</sup>

In the aftermath of the LRP, a great reliance was placed on technology to answer the commander's need for timely and accurate intelligence. A plethora of gadgets were fielded that promised to provide the commander with all the information he needed on the enemy. The problem with placing a heavy reliance on gadgets is that technology is too often defeated by either natural or manmade conditions. Rain, snow, fog, cloud cover, or radio interference can easily defeat the most expensive and sophisticated of ground based or overhead surveillance systems. The current family of intelligence collection systems are subject to human interpretations and often the final outcome does not accurately reflect what is actually happening in the real world. Animals can become vehicles, mock-ups can be seen as the real thing, and harmless commercial aircraft can be viewed as attacking hostile aircraft. We must



exploit technology whenever possible to employ machines to do things that they do better than man, but we must not forget to keep man in the equation and to incorporate him into the final solution. Our dependence on gadgets is deeply rooted in American culture and has been our savior in the past. However, the mistake too often made is to rely too heavily on "toys" when experience dictates that a proper mix of man and machine is the best means for collecting and reporting reliable combat intelligence.<sup>17</sup>

Our American military tradition has historically considered elite units as out of the conventional main stream and those serving multiple assignments in them doomed to military mediocrity. During periods of crises the Army has tolerated these units as a necessary evil, however, historically it has denigrated and disbanded them when the shooting stops and they are no longer needed. The unfortunate paradox of this anti-elitist thinking is that while we are concerned about the absence of esprit among our soldiers we disband organizations of high morale and esprit.

It was this anti-elitist attitude and a desire to distance itself from a concept associated with the Vietnam War, coupled with a fascination with technology, that motivated the Army to abandon the LRRP concept in 1974.<sup>18</sup> Fortunately, the Army has learned very well the lessons of the past and has revitalized all special operations forces. Although, LRS units are in the grey area between special operations and conventional forces they are enjoying the benefits of a renaissance of elite special operations units. The United States has created a Special Operations Command (USSOCOM); the US Army has created a separate Special Forces

branch; increased to four the number of Special Forces Groups in the active force structure; created a Ranger Regiment with three battalions; and in October 1986 activated a Long Range Surveillance company at corps and a detachment at division level. In the dawn of the approaching new century, the focus of the Army is shifting from the potential battlefields of central Europe. The well placed current emphasis on these LRS units hopefully will not shift but rather remain strong, and their primary mission of intelligence collection not become diluted by enthusiastic but misinformed commanders.

## CHAPTER III

### LRSU TODAY IN USAREUR

The USAREUR based LRS companies are an organic part of the tactical exploitation battalion of the corps' military intelligence brigade. The commander of the tactical exploitation battalion is responsible for the training, morale, and discipline of the company and receives LRS missions from the corps commander through the G-2. The LRS company is composed of three platoons for a total of eighteen, six-man LRS teams, a communications platoon, and a headquarters platoon consisting of an operations and a maintenance section. Each LRS team is lead by a staff sergeant and his team is capable of operating for eight days up to 150 kilometers behind enemy lines. The teams report back via HF skywave burst transmissions through a rear base radio station on threat unit strengths, dispositions, movements, and activities. The reports are received in the LRS operations section and passed to the corps G-2 who is responsible for the teams' mission target. The LRS teams are capable of a variety of insertion means which are generally limited by the target area, training level of a particular team, available resources, and imagination. For several reasons the USAREUR corps level teams' most viable insertion means are currently limited to the organic Blackhawk helicopters found in the corps aviation brigade.

The team missions generally vary from static surveillance to limited reconnaissance and other specified intelligence tasks. LRS

teams are not armed, equipped, or specifically trained to conduct direct action missions. Although the company commander, platoon leaders, and team leaders are all in authorized airborne/ranger positions, the teams themselves should not be confused with special forces or ranger units. The central focus of today's LRS teams are satisfying the commander's PIR (priority intelligence requirements) as articulated by his G-2.

The LRS teams are, however, a highly trained and specialized human intelligence (HUMINT) unit capable of operating across the entire operational continuum. They have demonstrated on several major NATO, USAREUR and corps level exercises that they are very capable of supporting Airland Battle doctrine in the high intensity battlefield expected to be found in USAREUR. They have the capability to support peacetime contingency operations such as Panama and Grenada, and can provide invaluable surveillance and reconnaissance to support the law enforcement agencies involved in the drug war along our national borders.

The primary means by which the teams can support Airland Battle is to insert themselves well in front of the FLOT and establish surveillance of a named area of interest (NAI), normally a key road intersection, railhead, or airfield. LRS soldiers are able to not only report generically what they find, but when fully trained are capable of recognizing over 180 different types of Soviet, Warsaw Pact, and NATO aircraft and vehicles, and distinguishing between Soviet and Warsaw Pact, base-line, and signature vehicles.

This type of information and level of detail can be used to differentiate between the second-tactical and first-operational echelon of the first strategic echelon and provide the information

necessary for the G-2 to accurately determine the main attack. No electronic sensor or overhead imagery system can replace the well trained and disciplined soldier being able to reason and understand what he is seeing and report that information in a cogent and timely manner.

### METHODS OF INSERTION

Both of the corps' companies in USAREUR are designated airborne units. Although the USAREUR Commander has recently authorized all LRS units in Europe to jump, as of this writing, none of the LRS units in Europe, nor the heavy divisional units in CONUS, are on permanent jump status. Airborne insertion is one of many viable means of inserting an LRS team that is supported by doctrine. This artificially imposed constraint has had a major negative impact not only on the operations of the unit, but on the morale of the individual soldiers. Not being on airborne status has been a continuing challenge to the leadership of all LRS units in USAREUR and those heavy divisions affected in CONUS. The airborne issue has also had a negative impact on training in Europe with our NATO allies.

Since reactivation in October 1986, the American LRS units in Europe have greatly benefited from participation in LRS exercises hosted by our NATO allies. The British, German, Danish, Belgian and Dutch have all conducted major LRS exercises over the last several years and have habitually extended invitations for the Americans to participate. With the exception of the Americans, all NATO LRS teams are on permanent jump status and normally incorporate an

airborne insertion of some if not all of their LRS teams on an exercise. The US restriction from jumping puts an unnecessary burden on the support structure of the exercise in order to accommodate the US teams. Because of this restriction, there have been incidences where American LRS teams have not been invited to participate on some international exercises. Not only does not being able to jump threaten participation in future exercises, but it also has a major negative impact on the morale of the American soldier when he sees his NATO counterparts conducting an airborne insertion knowing he will not be afforded the opportunity to jump even though he wears the wings of a paratrooper.

One short sighted solution to this self imposed problem is to put the soldiers on permissive jump status. On the surface this sounds like a reasonable solution, however, it creates a very divisive situation whereas, by Army policy, only those personnel with at least three cumulative years on parachute status can participate in airborne operations.<sup>19</sup> The remainder of the unit is artificially inserted by ground vehicle and then allowed to watch those who jumped get awarded the host nation's wings at the conclusion of the exercise.

Compounding this situation is the fact that with the three year time requirement the only soldiers normally getting to jump are the more experienced non-commissioned officers. Unfortunately, the young soldiers are relegated to riding into the exercise in the back of a canvas covered flat-bed truck or by some other equally ignominious method. We should not arbitrarily abandon the parachute as a means of insertion off-handedly as being obsolete

and impractical as the impact on the morale of the individual soldier is far greater than restricting the available means of insertion.

All available means of insertion should be made available to LRS teams. This realistically could range, depending on the area, from the two feet of the individual soldier to waterborne or airborne operations utilizing both rotary and fixed wing conventional and special operations aircraft such as the MH-60, MC 130 Combat Talon, or HH-53 Pave-Low helicopters. If the corps commander is going to insert an LRS team deep behind enemy lines with any realistic probability of success, then the MH-60 helicopter should be authorized at the corps level. Although a severe shortage of these special mission aircraft exist within the Army, they should be added to the inventory of the corps aviation brigade. The corps commander then would have an organic asset under his control that could realistically support LRS deep cross-FLOT insertion operations. Additionally, the corps commander should be given tasking authority on a "not to interfere" basis for in theater special operations aircraft which are normally reserved exclusively for the use of strategic special operations units.

Finally, all US Army Long Range Surveillance soldiers should be placed immediately on full parachute status and be authorized not only the pay but also the privilege to proudly wear the internationally recognized symbol worn by the rest of worlds LRS community -- the maroon beret of a paratrooper.<sup>20</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### EQUIPMENT ISSUES

#### (GORTEX, OPTICS, WEAPONS, COMMUNICATIONS)

Most of the initial growth problems associated with the activation and fielding of the LRS units have already been rectified through the dedicated hard work of many good and caring people. Several viable fixes are on the horizon and it is a matter of time before they are implemented. The challenge now is not to reinvent the wheel, but rather insure that fixes remain current and planned corrective actions are fully implemented in the called for time-frame. In some areas work remains to be done to enable the LRS units to perform to their optimum potential. The areas that need further attention center around the following: individual clothing and equipment, optics, weapons, and communications.

Everything that a LRS soldier needs to accomplish his mission must be carried on his back. The weight of the rucksack primary limiting factor affecting the duration of the team's mission.

The specific list of gear a soldier must carry is mission, terrain, and weather dependent. LRS rucksacks normally average from 75-125 pounds of food, clothing, inclement weather gear, batteries, radios, ammunition, and numerous other mission related gear.

To remain combat effective the soldier must be protected from the elements and it is essential he be issued the lightest and most



effective gear that today's technology makes possible. All LRS soldiers are authorized both the ECWCS (extreme cold weather clothing system) and the ECWSS (extreme cold weather sleep system).<sup>21</sup> These Gortex items are the state of art technology for protecting human beings from the elements and decreasing the weight of the rucksack. They are not comfort items but rather basic equipment requirements for an effective all season LRS operation. Although some of this equipment is in the hands of the troops, LRS units are experiencing difficulty in fully obtaining these items and should be given a higher priority for fielding.

The primary purpose for inserting an LRS team is to conduct limited reconnaissance and static surveillance of a particular target. It should follow that the soldier given that mission be equipped with the best day and night optics available. The European teams are currently fielded with the new M-22 Steiner 7X50 binoculars, and although somewhat heavy and bulky, the M-22 does perform the day LRS mission well.

The hours of darkness or limited visibility present a special set of problems for an LRS soldier. Without state of the art night optics the soldiers are forced to move dangerously close to the target area in order to properly carry out the mission. European teams are currently fielded with the AN-PVS-4, AN-PVS-5 and are fielding the state of the art AN-PVS-7b as a replacement for the PVS-5. Both the PVS-5 and PVS-7b are mounted with a head strap allowing for hands free operation and are very well suited for night movement. However, they do not provide the range needed to maintain a safe stand-off from the target needed when conducting

night surveillance. The PVS-4 is a good piece of surveillance gear especially when upgraded with state of the art 3rd generation illumination tubes. However, it too suffers from reduced range forcing minimum stand-off from the target at night. The range of both the PVS-4 and 7b can be increased by the addition of magnification lenses, however, no perfect solution to the night stand-off problem currently exists. One area that shows promise and needs further exploration is the Thermal Weapons Sight (TWS). The TWS may prove to be well suited for the surveillance mission and provide the much needed night stand-off capability.<sup>22</sup>

The European corps level LRS teams are currently armed with the M-16A-1 rifle which is generally agreed to be ill-suited for the LRS mission. The weapon has a relative short range in comparison to the M-16A-2, however, the main reason it is considered to be ill-suited for the LRS mission is its length. During movement, the weapon is wider than the body and snags in vegetation. When operating out of a hide or observation site its length becomes awkward and cumbersome. The M-16 series of weapons (some LRS units have been issued the M-16-A-2) are scheduled to be replaced with the M-4 which has an expanding stock and fires the new A-2 ammunition. Additionally, two M-9s, the 9mm Beretta model 92, pistols are authorized per team.

With the authorization of the M-4 rifle, no provisions have been made to provide LRS teams with a greatly needed suppressed weapon capability. The use of a suppressed weapon would not be to provide an increased offensive capability, but rather to enhance a team's survivability. A team with a suppressed weapon, if

compromised by a chance encounter with an enemy patrol, could quietly break contact and not alert any nearby enemy units. One of the best, if not the best, suppressed weapon in the world is the German, Heckler & Koch MP-5-SD-6. The SD-6 is carried by the JaegerKorpset, Denmark's LRS unit, the German GSG-9, the British SAS, and other NATO special operations units. It fires a 9mm parabellum projectile that is fully compatible with the new M-9 pistol which would not create an ammunition mismatch problem. The SD-6 is designed to be a truly suppressed weapon. It, unlike other weapons, slows the projectile to sub-sonic speeds eliminating the loud clap of air as the bullet passes. Although the SD-6 is quieter and as such a far superior suppressed weapon, the M-4 rifle is capable of being somewhat suppressed.<sup>23</sup> At least two suppressed weapons should be authorized per LRS team. When on the move two suppressed weapons would provide both front and rear quiet security. While in the surveillance mode, one weapon could remain at the team's hide site and the second could provide a suppressed capability at the observation site. Regardless of the particular weapons system used, the overarching issue is to authorize and provide a suppressed capability to the US LRS teams.

Communications is the lifeblood of today's LRS units. If an LRS team cannot quickly and accurately report what it has observed, the entire effort has gone for nothing. The current DMDG (ditigial message device group), an HF bursting device, is used by all special operations units in the US Army to include the LRS community. The DMDG is a far cry from state of the art equipment. It is a totally broken system, and in great need of replacement. It bursts at a

266 baud rate, has no on-line encryption capability, and is a maintenance nightmare. At a 266 baud rate the average message takes 8-15 seconds to transmit which is entirely too long. The messages are hand encoded utilizing one-time pads which often generate mistakes and further slows the reporting time. The DMDG is susceptible to breakdown and once down normally will remain down for well past thirty days waiting on parts. The technology exists today to burst an HF skywave signal at 2400 baud and to sustain 1200 baud both day and night. The current DMDG must be replaced with a state of the art bursting device with on-line encryption capability and a sustained day/night baud rate of at least 1200 bits per second.

Current plans are to eventually replace the DMDG with SOICS (special operations improved cryptographic system) throughout the US Army special operations and LRS community. The SOICS is vastly superior to the current DMDG in all areas. It is small, measuring only 3 1/2" wide, 5" high, and 2 inches deep. It weighs only 1 1/2 pounds and has an expected service life of 5000 hours. It is capable of transmitting in the HF, VHF, and UHF spectrum at variable baud rates ranging from 300 to 64,000 bits per second. In the HF mode it can transmit at either a 300, 1200, or 2400 baud rate depending on atmospherics. SOICS has on-line encryption, which will eliminate the need for the manual method using the cumbersome one-time pads. The encryption chip used in the SOICS is approved to handle messages up to top secret.<sup>24</sup>

The current basis of issue plan (BOIP) for SOICS authorizes Special Forces units to have two devices per team. The BOIP for

the LRS community, however, is only one SOICS per team. This will provide for no redundancy leaving an LRS team without a means of communicating if their only bursting device is damaged on an operation. The BOIP for LRS teams must be increased to at least two SOICS per LRS team.

Special Forces units will start receiving SOICS in the Fall of 1990. LRS units are not scheduled for fielding until late 1993 or early 1994.<sup>25</sup> The SOICS is a much needed fix for both the Special Forces and the LRS community. The current fielding plan for SOICS is totally unsatisfactory. LRS units need a replacement for the DMDG now and not wait behind every Special Forces unit in the Army to be issued the SOICS. A compromise could be reached with fielding alternating between LRS and Special Forces units. Regardless of the actual details, it is operationally vital that LRS units receive a higher priority on the current proposed fielding plan.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FUTURE OF LRS

Today the major question surrounding the LRS community is who should control LRS assets in the future. Advocates on one side of the issue argue that the majority of skills associated with LRS are combat arms skills and as such it properly belongs in the combat arms as they are best suited to train LRS soldiers. The counter argument quickly points out that although LRS units utilize combat arms skills in order to function, the mission of LRS is the collection of intelligence and as such it should remain in the hands of military intelligence personnel. The LRS company is assigned to the Tactical Exploitation battalion of the corp's MI brigade. The command and staff relationship that currently exists has proven to be tactically sound and technically functional. If the intent is to preserve LRS as an intelligence collection asset, then one should look at examples from the past. The Alamo Scouts of WW-II and the LRRPs in Vietnam are examples of how it should and should not work. The combat experience of both of these units demonstrates the best and worst use of an intelligence asset and validates the concept that LRS units are currently in the proper chain of command. In order to insure that the focus of LRS units remains primarily on intelligence collection and eliminate the potential to repeat past abuses, LRS assets must continue to remain under the operational control of the G-2.

As we move closer to the year 2000 we should look at

redefining the role that LRS will play in a CONUS based contingency army of the next century. LRS soldiers in Europe are extremely well trained and have demonstrated on numerous occasions that they are the corps commander's most reliable, all weather, twenty-four hour a day intelligence asset. They are fully focused on the Soviet and Warsaw Pact and in identifying follow-on forces primarily through stationary surveillance.

The probability of super-power conflict in Europe, however, is now greatly reduced as evidenced by the recent large holes made in the Berlin wall, the dismantling of the iron curtain and the de-facto demise of the Warsaw Pact as a military alliance. The most probable conflict we as a nation will be involved in for the near term is peacetime contingency operations under the difficult to define rubric of low intensity conflict (LIC). These operations will utilize CONUS based light forces under the operational control of a contingency corps similar to the successful military operations conducted in Grenada and recently in Panama.

The intelligence needs of the light contingency corps commander are naturally different from that of the heavy corps commander focused on Europe and the Soviet/Warsaw Pact threat. Contingency corps intelligence needs cannot be fully met solely through static surveillance. LRS units should expand their operations to reach more of a balance between stationary surveillance and active reconnaissance. Any movement naturally increases the risk of detection and increases the danger to the team, however, LRS units can be effectively used in deep reconnaissance. Some examples are the reconnaissance of airfields, beachheads, drop zones, landing zones, and future raid targets. These types of missions are similar

to the reconnaissance and surveillance missions given the Alamo Scouts operating in a very high risk environment in WW II.<sup>26</sup>

The nation's attention is now focused on what role the military should play in the war on drugs. The military must demonstrate leadership in this area and be proactive in proposing appropriate missions. A major contribution the military can provide to the effort is providing intelligence support to US law enforcement agencies.

LRS, as a part of the intelligence effort, can play a vital role in the war on drugs. LRS soldiers in conjunction with law enforcement agents could provide surveillance of known drug infiltration routes, airfields and trans-shipment points. The surveillance and reconnaissance support currently being provided by National Guard units to both state and federal law enforcement agencies is a good example of the role LRS units could provide if given the mission.<sup>27</sup>

#### SELECTION OF LRSU SOLDIERS

All soldiers are not well suited for the special rigors of stationary surveillance and deep reconnaissance missions. Not everyone possesses the requisite qualities of a good LRS soldier. LRS soldiers must have the courage, self confidence, self discipline, maturity, and sense of adventure needed to operate in a high threat environment far from the security of other friendly units. Soldiers that enjoy "breaking things and killing people" rarely make a good LRS soldier where the entire focus is on avoiding contact with the



enemy. Currently soldiers are assigned to LRS units with no formal prior selection. If LRS units are to get and maintain high caliber soldiers well suited for surveillance work, a formalized selection process must be established. Selection could be built around the existing LRSU course at Fort Benning where volunteers would be screened according to their ability, and desire to do LRS work. At the conclusion of the training, those that met standards would be awarded an additional skill identifier and recommended for a LRS assignment, and tracked for future assignments. Part of the selection process should be a personality screening to determine a soldier's psychological suitability for surveillance and reconnaissance duty. A psychiatrist, assigned to LRSU school and familiar with the LRS mission, should conduct the screening. No matter what method is ultimately used, a formal selection process is vitally needed for the LRS community.<sup>28</sup>

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Regardless of the geographic area or the point in the continuum of conflict, the primary function of LRS should remain that of an intelligence collector. LRS units must continue to be controlled by the G-2 and assigned to MI battalions or brigades. An expansion and adjustment of the intelligence mission, however, is required to keep pace with changing environments. Although increased emphasis should be given to active reconnaissance, LRS soldiers must not be used in direct action operations. They must not be employed as line infantry nor should they be used to adjust deep artillery fires. LRS is too valuable an intelligence asset to burden it with additional direct action missions. Those who advocate the use of LRS soldiers for direct action missions have forgotten the lessons learned from the Vietnam era LRRPs. Those advocates fail to appreciate the combat multiplier effect of the information LRS soldiers can provide in a surveillance and reconnaissance role. Our experience with LRRPs in Vietnam tells us that to use LRS in direct action missions is to lose them as a vital provider of combat intelligence and would be akin to "killing the goose that lays the golden eggs."

LRS soldiers have demonstrated on numerous occasions that they provide invaluable intelligence information. For this to continue we must insure that nobody tinkers with the current command and control relationships. LRS soldiers must continue to be highly trained in intelligence collection operations and be fully fielded with

the best equipment todays technology has to offer. If this is done, then LRS soldiers will play an increasingly vital part in the CONUS based contingency Army of the next century.

## ENDNOTES

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